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Ara



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Chapter 1 by Amity

CHAPTER 1

"Cora! Cora, come on!" May called from the kitchen.

"Coming! Where are Jax and Will?" I asked May, as I entered the kitchen. I had my hands full of bags for camping.

"I don't know! Jax said he would meet us here, but I don't know where your brother is!" May exclaimed dramatically, packing snacks for the ride to the camp grounds. I stopped her as she was about to put a giant cereal box in the bag.

"May, I know you get hungry when you're excited," I started, slowly removing the box from her grasp. "But me, you, Jax, and Will are never going to eat all of this food on the way there." May pouted, crossing her arms like a little kid. I smirked at her reaction, and turned around. I brought all of my bags to the front door of my house. It was a fairly sized place, with 3 floors including the basement. The kitchen was on the top floor, with the living room and my parent's room. On the second floor, where I was now, we had the game room, the commons, my mom's study, and both me and Will's bedrooms. And in the basement we had a playroom, my dad's office, and Will's 'Man Cave.' I walked out of the front door, leaving the bags behind. Jax volunteered to drive, but I told him that Will would, since the camping trip was originally his idea. The only

problem was, I had no idea where Will was. I walked up to the gate leading to my backyard, and slowly pushed it open. It creaked. I bounced off of the walls of the house and the fence alike. As I closed the gate behind me, I swore I heard the hiss of a human. A human in pain. I ran towards where I thought the noise came from. As I came close, I saw it was

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the grove of trees that me, Will, May and Jax used to play in when we were really little. We would play Grove of Whispers, a game we had created where we pretended that we heard the trees whispering to us. And, sometimes, I would get so into the game that I actually started hearing things. But I had always pushed it past as my imagination. I walked towards the entrance to the grove, where me and Will had built a passage way out of an old door from Mom's study. It had grave vines from the vineyard next door that we had planted growing on the railing. The railing was a long polished oak plank that our father had made for us. I knocked on the door quickly, eager to see if whoever was inside was Will, and if he was alright, but the door would not open. Even now I couldn't come up with a logical explanation, I passed it off at the time, realizing that me and Will had a chant we used to open the doors. Each was different. I recited mine, which was memorized over and over again, almost as if it was super glued to the back of my mind.

"Enters Queen Coraline, hearer of the legends of the Grove of Whispers." The Pass groaned, as if responding to the authority in my voice. I pushed the door open, and stepped through. I was hit with memories of my childhood as I looked at the Grove that had not changed a bit. It was a large circle composed of large oak trees, with Spruce and Crab apple trees filed in behind them. A golden hammock hung in between two trees on the far left, and an old blue beanbag lay on the far right. Behind the center tree farthest from The Pass was a little hazelnut cabinet filled with maps and stories and legends that we wrote. And there in the middle of the Grove was Will, in all of his glory, with a mouse trap on his finger. It was bleeding badly, but nothing a very large band-aid couldn't fix. Once he noticed me, Will started groaning, pretending to be in pain. "Oh! The pain! The agonizing, torment of dying! Cora, oh sweet Coraline, Tell our mother I love her..." His voice died down and he pretended to be dead. I stood there with an emotionless face, until I couldn't hold it in anymore. I burst out laughing, pointing at Will. I dropped on the ground, rolling on the dirt, holding my stomach as I laughed. I must have been laughing for a long time, because when I finally calmed down, Will was standing over me smirking, pointing his crooked, bloody finger at me, with his eyes narrowed accusingly.

"Yoooooooouuuu!" He screeched, starting to walk forward. I slowly crab walked backwards, tears threatening to fall, I was laughing so hard. He started running for me just as I stood up. I ran out

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"Never, King William. Queen Maynolia!" He called to the kitchen. "Come, fight this war! Choose your side!" May came running in not a minute later, with four plastic swords in her hands.

"I choose the side of the mighty King William! This is War!" She yelled, tossing each of us a sword. Jax helped me up, and bowed slightly to me.

"Queen Coraline, I hope you pardon my actions in this war." He explained.

"What?" Was all I had time to say, right before he picked me up bridal style, and ran out of the door. He ran right to The Pass, and said loudly to the door,

"Enters King Jaxarann and Queen Coraline, Rulers of the Grove!" He opened The Pass door, and stepped inside. He placed me down in the center of the Grove.

"So, that's what you wanted me to excuse, King Jaxarann? The fact that you picked me up and ran out of battle? Now, I know you to be noble man, King Jaxarann, but running from war? I never would have thought." I said disappointed, walking over to sit in the old beanbag. He chuckled at my tone, yet did not argue. I looked over to the door, wondering what was taking Will and May so long to break in.

"Did you enchant the door to The Pass, King Jaxarann? It seems as if King William and Queen Maynolia can not get in." I stated curiously. I glanced over at Jax, who had a confused look on his face.

"I did no such thing, Queen Coraline. Though it does seem suspicious, do not dwell on it for long. Which weapon will you fight with, Milady? Bow, Spear or Sword?" Jax asked. I rolled my eyes. He knew. He smiled and walked behind the smallest oak tree, where I had built a hook for my hunting bow. I did go hunting in the woods behind the vineyard next door occasionally, but only with permission from the Kieds, the owners of the vineyard. He handed it to me as he took out his sword, which was behind another tree. It was a real sword, one that he got at an antique shop down the road from his house. I grabbed my arrows, which had suction cups on the end, and turned to Jax.

"It is time for battle, King Jaxarann. Let us go fight for my freedom." I said proudly. Jax smiled, and we went to The Pass. He opened the door, saying,

"Queen's first, Milady." I giggled, and went through the door, with Jax following close behind. As soon as we were outside, I pulled up my bow.

"A..."

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about 4 foot. It was beautifully carved, and I had gotten it for her for her 14th birthday. Will had his two hunting knives. We used to go on epic hunts together, where I would shoot the animal in a leg or something, injuring it so that it couldn't escape as Will used his knives to kill it, and skin it later on. Believe it or not, Deer meat had been a very common thing for us to eat since me and Will started hunting. We even gave some to Mrs. and Mr. Kieds, when we had an especially good hunt. As May came towards me, Jax went off to fight Will. It had kind of become a dance, as May's spear bounced off the arrows I was shooting at her. I had never been one for close combat, but I knew that May, Jax and Will all loved it. So, I had gotten my new bow, that had a thin, long little knife hidden within the handle. I pulled it out, and strapped the bow over my back, alongside my quiver. I used my knife for mostly defense, as we never actually hurt each other. Finally, after May started to tire, I hid my knife back within my bow handle, and started shooting arrows again. I got one to stick to her forehead because of the suction cup. I stopped to laugh for a bit, right before I heard Jax grunt in pain. I shot one last suction arrow at May's forehead, and whipped around to see a long cut on Jax's leg, and Will standing in front of it with one of his hunting knives, it was a small cut, but not one to be forgotten.

"King Jaxarann! Can you continue with your battle? You are wounded, and I have already defeated the Queen!" I yelled across the yard, and once hearing my statement, Jax gratefully accepted help. I ran over to Will, and seeing me, his eyes widened. You see, though he would never admit it, Will was really afraid of me. I had always been amazing with my bow, and once I got my knife I had taught myself very quickly how to use it. I was a fast learner, so I knew how to handle most fights, against most weapons, and still win. I had never lost a fight with Will, and I had never once gotten more than cut or two within battle. We started out slowly at first, me only shooting an arrow when I had to. I was running low on arrows in my quiver, and collected defended arrows whenever possible. Will saw this, but knew that it didn't make much of a difference, since I was just as good with my knife as with my bow. When I had about 5 arrows left, I strung my bow over my back and took out my knife. Will came in close, and we started to fight closer. I slashed at his arm, making sure he could block, as he went for my legs, making me jump. I decided to draw a little blood, just for payback from Jax. I swiped towards his left arm, and as he went in to do a cross block, changed directions, cutting his right arm a bit.

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"Why do you always win, Queen Coraline?" She complained, as me and Jax walked them both towards the Grove.

"Because I'm just awesome like that." I answered nonchalantly, bringing Will up to The Pass.

"Enters Queen Coraline and King Jaxarann, with King William and Queen Maynolia as captives."

I said loudly to the door of The Pass. It groaned, and I took a step back as Jax opened the door.

After we let them go in the Grove, I turned towards Jax.

"What do we do now?" He asked, glancing at Will and May.

"Well, King Jaxarann..." I whispered my plan in his ear. After I was done, he smirked.

"Of course, my Queen." He said evilly. And we left Will and May looking confused and afraid in the Grove, as we went inside.

Chapter 2 by Aelin_Herondale6



"Grab your bags, prisoners! We depart for Bay Water's Campgrounds!" Jax commanded.

Forgetting all past formalities, we ran inside to get our stuff. We threw the bags in Will's car. "I call shotgun!" Jax yelled. The drive to the campground was about an hour long, I sat next to May in the backseat.

"Want a snack anyone?" She asked.

"Yah, sure!" Said Will and Jax in unison.

May handed them both granola bars. "Want anything Cora?"

"I'm good, thanks." I replied, getting out my book. The hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien was one of my favorite books and I had read it too many times to count.

By the time we had set up the tents it was almost dark out. Will lit a fire in the fire pit and May provided marshmallows. I grabbed some sticks from the brush nearby. We roasted the marshmallows over the fire and made s'mores. I looked into the woods behind our campsite and saw a pair of large, yellow eyes. I yelped.

"What is it Cora?" May asked, alarmed.

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I looked back to where I saw the eyes.

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I replied trying to sound like I was being brave.

"I must be seeing things!"

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